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## THE RENAISSANCE AND THE SCHOOL, 1440-1580

### II.

LET us now look at the influence of the Revival on the schools. In the Public School, the Revival dates from the latter half of the 15th century. So early as 1476, we find Alex. Hegius at Deventer teaching Greek and a classical Latinity in the spirit of Humanism, to the boy Erasmus among others. But it was quite the end of the century, before this example was much followed. The best results of the Humanistic revival in the School were in truth not visible until Trotzendorf, friend of Melanchthon, began his scholastic career in 1516 at Görlitz and afterwards as rector [1524] of the Goldberg School. There were many schools, it is true, throughout Europe in which instruction was given on the lines of Trotzendorf, but none so celebrated as his. The organization of the school, the extent to which the elder boys were employed to assist the master both in the discipline and the teaching, the spirit of friendliness between the master and the elder pupils, all anticipate in a remarkable way what is related of Dr. Arnold. His school was called a "second Latium." Latin alone was spoken and the writing of themes in classical Latinity was one of the chief aims of the grammatical discipline. The authors read were, Cicero, Terence, Plautus, Virgil and Ovid. In addition to this, Greek Grammar and selections from Greek authors formed part of the curriculum, while logic and rhetoric (the latter chiefly based on the study of Cicero's orations, guided doubtless by the *De Oratore*) were taught. Natural Philosophy, Music and Arithmetic, as then understood, also received an adequate measure of attention. Religious teaching was a conspicuous feature of the school, no less than literature. From this course of instruction, we may infer the character of the school, and of similar schools in their degree. He died in 1556. A very eminent schoolmaster he was.

The course of school instruction under the Humanistic influence may also be gathered from the record of John Sturm of Strassburg, where he began his celebrated Gymnasium in 1537 continuing to superintend it for forty-five years.

Michael Neander, again, pupil of Melanchthon, and rector of the Cloister school at Ilfeld in the Hartz, was born in 1525, and died in 1595.

The instruction in the best humanistic schools, let it be noted, included elementary mathematics, history and geography, and such physical science as was at the time accepted. In many schools music was taught. Neander would seem to have had a more open and more progressive mind than Sturm.

In the schools of the three men whom I have named, we find eminent types of the Humanistic school of the Reformation. There was in all of them a combination of religious with Humanistic aims. The classical fervour of Italy, and the religious earnestness of the North met in their schools; and many other teachers, though less personally distinguished, carried the same combined influences into the daily work of instruction.

Nor did these combined aims ever after wholly cease to characterize the secondary schools of Europe. The difference between the Protestant and the Jesuit schools was perhaps this: The Protestant schools took up personal religion into Humanism, as a part of it, though an essential part; the Jesuit schools took up Humanism into the Catholic system, but carefully subordinated the former to the latter. Protestant educators, however, suffered from their isolation: everything depended on the genius of individuals, whereas Catholic educators organized a system, of which individuals were the mere instruments. Here, as elsewhere, the prestige and tradition of organization was able to accomplish more than the irregular and uncontrolled activity of able men here and there. A school of educational method in connection with the universities could best have supplied what was lacking to Protestant education. It would have done more for Protestantism than any other possible instrument of defence and attack.

Let me at the risk of repetition say here with special reference to the public school that the essence of Humanism in its larger meaning was that it was an opening of men's eyes afresh to nature and life. But it is given to few men, and those chiefly of the poetic temperament, to keep their eyes open for long. There is an instinctive need of dogma and form; for without these there is no intellectual repose. Each man's philosophy of life is fixed at the point where he grows tired of thinking, it has been said. Even the educated man begins to build his own prison-house very early. Especially must this be the case with teachers, simply because they have to teach; for which a scholastic creed of some sort is necessary. They gladly accept what is offered them in the name of authority and tradition. They have not time to think; they imitate what they have seen done, or apply a new doctrine which they have once accepted, as if it were a revelation. Many schoolmasters will resent this estimate; but the fact is, it is only those who recognize the truth of what I say as to the pedagogic tendency of mind, who *do* think, and keep themselves fresh and open. The intellectual effort and the moral courage required to organize the humanistic school must have been the endowment of few; an intellectual effort and moral courage far greater than has been required in these latter days to maintain that the education of the human mind should be a matter for philosophic and historical study by all those who propose to educate it. Sturm's school must have been an admirable school, because it was his own making; but the imitators over Europe would imitate its form and lose its spirit. Neander's conceptions were broader and more comprehensive. He had, I think, a more living mind. He even asked himself why he should teach Latin and Greek at all—a daring, even audacious question in the full tide of Humanism. This openness of mind was, I say, of the essence of Humanism, though already many of the leading humanists had foreclosed all such questions. Ciceronian Latin had become a fetich, as Erasmus saw. It was not possible for more than one generation of grown men to live solely by imitation. I do not say that Nean-

der, or even Melanchthon, deliberately recognized this. They were too much involved in the movement. The question, indeed, could not arise with them; for the duty of all men then and there was to connect the life of the modern world with the pre-Christian. And yet, where the *true* Hellenic spirit showed itself, it would always be a living and progressive spirit.

Neander showed by his teaching and his curriculum that he shared this Hellenic spirit in fuller measure than most. History, geography, science, music,—all entered into his school, in addition to the traditionary (but reformed) grammar, rhetoric and dialectic. He had to make books to supply his wants, where Melanchthon had not already anticipated him. He wrote a handbook of natural philosophy and a “Compendium Chronicorum” (a kind of universal history) and a geography entitled *Orbis terrae Divisio*. Up to the sixteenth year Latin and Greek were the chief subjects studied; but there was a wide course of reading—so wide indeed that much of it must have been cursive. In the sixteenth year Hebrew was begun, and in the seventeenth and eighteenth the elements and chief *precepta* of logic and rhetoric, and thereafter physics, geography and history. If we compare this curriculum with that of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, we become alive to the barrenness of even our best schools, after the ardour of young Humanism had cooled. The realism, which is also the reality, of Humanism was, in truth, nobly illustrated at Ilfeld; for there, under Neander, are found the direct contact of the young mind with a wide range of literature, with rhetoric, dialectic, history, and also with the world of nature.

We are not to imagine that there were many schools like those of Trotzendorf, Neander and Sturm; but there were not a few working on the same lines: and in England, after the reforms of Colet in the foundation of St. Paul's, the stream of literary humanism flowed through many schools during the sixteenth century—Stratford-on-Avon among others, which Shakespeare must have attended. Then again Ascham took up the movement as its literary prophet.

The next generation saw, as I have pointed out, the rise of the philological movement, distinguished by the names of the younger Scaliger and Casaubon, and by the formulation of Protestant dogma. The schools felt the movement quickly enough, because of the tendency of all teaching to content itself with form and formula and precept. There was no agency for maintaining a scholastic aim and method; the scholastic profession in short was not a profession: it took the color of the time. It had no independent vitality.

But every great movement, even when it is spent, leaves some gain for the world. When we ask ourselves what the sixteenth century did for the secondary schools of Europe, we have only to compare the work of the old cathedral and monastery schools of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The classical authors of Greece and Rome were now firmly planted in the schools. The *spirit* of Neander and Sturm and Ascham was lost; but classical books remained, and could not be taken away. Grammar, though then (and now) badly taught, was simplified, because the text-books had been simplified. These were two solid facts which survived and defied the dullest of teachers.

But it appears to me that this was all. The glimmerings of method and the ethical fervor born of the alliance of Humanism with the reformed Christianity had disappeared, and grammar and flagellation, twin brothers, had re-asserted themselves—indeed from many schools they had never disappeared. Many causes contributed to this: the school cannot be permanently in advance of the time, and every organ of progressive civilization must wait for peace among the nations.

Meanwhile the great scheme of the evangelical Humanists which contemplated a vernacular education for all, had received practical effect in many towns; but as a universal scheme it had to wait (except in Scotland, and, later, in Saxony) for its full recognition on political enfranchisement; and this was a business of about 300 years. The movement, however, for primary vernacular religious schools was set on foot, and continued to

advance wherever the reformed religion was honestly held as a religion of personal conviction and soul-experience.

In the universities, again, the permanent gain to the Humanists was chiefly the introduction of Greek, a little mathematics, and the genuine Aristotle, though still chiefly through a Latin medium aided by scholastic text-books.

It has to be remembered that universities were always, till quite recently, placed in a difficult position. They were *scholæ publicæ* to which all might go, fit or unfit; and so long as the secondary schools were few in number, they had themselves to discharge the function of secondary schools. The necessity thus imposed on universities, and which led to their being attended by boys of 13 or 14, had in mediæval times been fully accepted, especially at Paris. The result was a low standard of general attainment, except for a select few. Then, the practice of giving school instruction at the universities reacted everywhere throughout Europe to prevent the erection of secondary schools. But the general conception of a university as a school of the higher faculties, law, medicine, theology and philosophy (which also was practically a higher faculty) was never quite lost sight of. In Arts, philosophy as an inheritance from the schoolmen, retained its place, spite of the assaults of the Humanists; but Bacon and Milton had to record their complaints of the futility and vanity of the work done in this department.

Prior to the fifteenth century, the higher university intellect occupied itself mainly with logic and metaphysics, as interpreted by the schoolmen in barbarous Latin, and too often based on a partially understood and garbled Aristotle. But in the midst of all this, they were trying to read for themselves the riddle of life and thought and accomplishing great things, when we consider the conditions under which they worked. With the revival of Greek, came the pure Aristotle, and after the fifteenth century, though scholastic logic and disputations still occupied the field, yet the ultimate reference was now to an understood authority. In the best universities, Luther desired to see the curriculum relieved from the Aristotelian metaphysics, ethics and physics,

as taught from text-books, and confined to the logic, rhetoric and poetics in the original, or studied in epitomes of the original. Cicero's rhetoric also he advocated, but without cumbrous commentaries. These philosophic studies, with the addition of Latin, Greek and Hebrew and their literatures, would have constituted Luther's scheme of university reform, and substantially also Melancthon's. And this was in truth the general line which the reform took where it was welcomed. At best, however, it was only initiated.

In short, even after the revival, the Aristotelian encyclopædia (metaphysics, logic, ethics, poetics, politics, physics) was the ideal curriculum; but now more genuinely Aristotelian than formerly, and not overlaid with commentary. The mass of students, however, could never get beyond their text-books, and these were still highly scholastic in their character. Thus the complaints of men like Bacon, and subsequently Milton, reëchoed by all educational reformers, were fully justified. In truth, the resettlement of the Faith of Europe, and the great political issues everywhere at stake, affected the universities profoundly, as being more then than now, the sole headquarters of learning, and so retarded the full growth of modern ideas in education. And yet the planting of mathematics and Greek in these high places and the study of the ancient literatures by the few at least, were permanent gains, and kept alive the newly kindled fires. The universities, however, like the rest of the world, had to wait for Bacon and Descartes and Newton, before they could quite throw off their mediævalism, and they, doubtless, owed it to the growth of modern literatures that the true purpose of studying the ancient classics was kept alive by being understood.

George Buchanan, the Scottish Humanist, who had taught in the Humanistic College (secondary school) of Bordeaux when Montaigne was a pupil there, and was familiar with the work of the University of Paris, drew up a scheme for the reform of the University of St. Andrews, which was printed in 1570. This is to my mind a very interesting document, as being a product of the humanistic revival, and a record of the

university scheme of the Humanists.<sup>1</sup> It is well worthy of our attention as showing the then curriculum of a good university, and I shall give the substance of it. In what we should call the secondary school, but what Buchanan calls the "College of Humanity," the course was to extend over six years. From the first, all were required to speak Latin and write a Latin theme daily. Their first reading book was to be Terence, and thereafter Cicero, Ovid, Virgil and Horace. In the fourth year they were to begin Greek, and in their fifth and sixth, read Homer and Hesiod. The boys were then to be admitted to the "College of Philosophy"—the university proper—and after two years were eligible for the degree of bachelor, the subjects of examination being dialectic, logic and morals. The next year and a half was devoted to natural philosophy, mathematics and metaphysics, after which they received their *licencia* (equivalent to M.A.). Those intended for the church then proceeded to the "College of Divinity," where they studied Hebrew, law and theology, expounding passages of scripture and holding disputations.

I have endeavored to sum up the gains of the Revival, in so far as it was educational, after it had hardened down into formula and routine. It must be admitted that, even in its narrowest conception, it afforded materials, both in the school and the university, whereby a true education might be given by capable men to competent students. But materials do not themselves suffice: there can be no education where there is no life, no vital intercourse of mind with mind in pursuit of some ideal aim, whether that be Ciceronianism, science, philosophy, Protestant dogma, or Catholic doctrine. The fire burns out, and all that has not gone off in smoke, is ashes, and with these generations of youth must content themselves, except where they are re-lighted by the rare genius of an eminent teacher. It cannot be expected that the average teacher should rise above the spirit and methods of the age in which he lives. But even in the ashes of the Humanistic curriculum as conceived by Neander and his followers lived their ancient fires, and the

<sup>1</sup> Hume Brown's vernacular writings of Buchanan (Scots Texts Society).

brighter spirits among the youth of Europe warmed themselves at them and were content.

For the ordinary boy, as for the ordinary teacher, school life as distinguished from university life was almost as dreary as ever. Grammar was the despot and rote-memory the slave. Verbalism again reasserted itself, though now, it is true, with higher aims, so far as Language was concerned. The attempt to introduce real studies—even history, broke down. In fact, how could it be otherwise? Who, or what agency was there to *organize the spirit* of the revival in the school domain and sustain the teacher's ambition to the level which it had reached in a few enthusiastic and original minds?

In some respects the greatest educational movement generated by the second Renaissance was that of Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit Order (born 1491, died 1556). To this I have already adverted; but it merits a fuller notice. This order with the Catholic Church at its back knew what it wanted; the Protestant Humanists did not. Primary education certainly received its great impulse from the Reformation; but secondary education had to grope its way and to encounter all sorts of opinions and schemes. There was in truth no genuine faith in it. Dogma and a godly upbringing was capable of accomplishing all the ends of education. It was not the Renaissance as a literary and æsthetic, but as a theological movement which led to the institution of the Jesuit schools. They were bulwarks of the Faith. They adopted as much of Humanism as served their purpose. To say what a Jesuit school was as compared with a Cathedral or monastery school is not difficult. Latin formed in the former as in the latter the central subject of instruction, but now it was the Latin of classical antiquity. Eloquence in the restrictive sense of Latin style was the aim. The main purpose of this system apart from its governing religious idea was to give command of Latin as a medium of communication. The Latin Orators and Poets were studied with a view to this. This marked advance on the mediæval system was a conspicuous feature of the school system. It was a return to Quintilian. If we add

the elements of Greek, we say all that there is to be said as to similar subjects of instruction. There is no record of any Jesuit school, so far as I know, which approached in its breadth of study or in the organization of school work, the Protestant Gymnasium of Sturm at Strassburg much less the school of Neander or of Trozendorf.

How was it then that the Jesuit schools so far excelled the Humanistic schools of the Reformation as wholly to eclipse them and to evoke the approval of Bacon and other Protestant men of eminence? The answer is contained in one word, Organization.

(1) There was a *ratio studiorum* deliberately conceived and carried out.

(2) There was an organization of the teaching staff so conceived as to attain the objects of the school and suited to a system of carefully graded classes.

(3) There was a *ratio docendi*. A great many sensible rules of method in teaching were adopted and put into practice. All parts of the school were subjected to one idea and to one unquestioned authority. The school worked as an organism.

If to these characteristics we add that the discipline was comparatively mild (always a consequence of good organization) and that great attention was paid to the health and bodily vigor of the pupils, that all the schools were everywhere alike as being under one Order and thus commanded the confidence of parents, we can easily see that success was certain. The Protestant schools had too much individualism about them. Their educational theory was larger, their course of instruction wider, the spirit that animated them was in the minds of the few here and there more that of Humanism and Freedom, but against such characteristics, admirable as they are, organization and recognized system will always carry the day.

It was not only by their activity in politics and church work that the Jesuits arrested the tide of Protestantism, but also by their schools. They believed in education as molding the future man, and had a belief in its power, which even to this day, Protestants do not share, spite of all their platform talk.

The school organization of the Jesuits became a tradition; the *ratio studiorum* and the *ratio docendi* were handed down. That even in these days the Protestant intellect does not believe in a School of Education is shown by the opposition or indifference which the movement to install education as a university subject has had to encounter and by the fatuous and complacent satisfaction with which secondary schoolmasters have contemplated their own ignorance of the principles and method of their art.

A new idea or a new enthusiasm is very efficacious while it lasts; but it cannot long endure. Men cannot go on living at high pressure. It is only in so far as the new idea admits of rational formulation, or at least of being absorbed into the existing civil economy, whether of politics or learning, that it can perpetuate itself. Classical literature in the schools or universities practically meant merely the classical *tongues*—a great gain when compared with mediæval barbarism. But if the humanistic fervor—partly æsthetic, partly ethical—was not in the teacher, the whole teaching degenerated rapidly into language-teaching in its most abstract and unmeaning form. To all but the select few among pupils, it then conveyed nothing, while engendering disgust of all books and all thought. This was a fact already in 1600; it is a fact now. The verbal, the abstract, the formal, is not mental food; it cannot, as such, be so. Its field is discipline; and this itself is of little account if divorced from the real. No man interested in the progress of humanity can be indifferent to the question: Can we not so use the material in our possession as to excite in the many a genuine interest in literature and thought and the truth of things? We cannot imperil the intellectual and moral welfare of generations on the chance-birth of teaching genius here and there. Is there a *method* by which learning would be as pleasant as eating when one is hungry, and which could be made the common possession of all who teach? If there be not such a method, then we must just go on as we have been doing, trying to coerce the mind of youth, and failing even in this. Is it possible that by making up our minds as to the end

we have in view in educating, we may get some light on the method to be pursued in order to reach that end? These questions occurred to Bacon, and were taken up by the Baconians, Ratke, Comenius, Locke, Pestalozzi. The race of schoolmasters called these men "theorists;" and there an end. This was enough to condemn them. The questions which they started seem to me very important, nay vital questions, if we are to educate at all. Perhaps we had better give it up.

In endeavoring to answer the questions, let us take advantage of history. Look at the universities of Europe at the present day. Whence comes their life, their progressiveness, without which there is no life? From Bacon and the Baconian induction and from vernacular literatures, I say without hesitation. It is the scientific spirit engaged in every department of human enquiry, physical, historical, philosophical, philological, æsthetic, that keeps them in these days centers of intellectual light. With all their deficiencies the higher learning of the world and all its highest rational interests were never so adequately represented in the universities as now. They are true centers of light, and why? *Because they seek scientific results and follow a scientific method.* Method has done it all. Is this same method practicable in the school? If so, under what modifications? There is always a certain percentage of dullards—born in the good providence of God to be hewers of wood and drawers of water. But can we not touch to fine issues 70 or 80 per cent. of the youth of the country? It is certainly worth trying. In fact many schools, especially of the humbler kind, have been already converted by method (and that even imperfectly understood) from dens of darkness and despair into chambers of light and hope.

Whether education in the true sense is possible or not, this is certain, that until the secondary schoolmasters study the subject at our universities before entering on what they are pleased to call their profession, a genuine and progressive, because scientifically grounded, improvement is hopeless. Science and scientific method, in all subjects, alone prevent the world from falling back into barbarism. Pure literature itself might seem adequate

to this ; but even literature is only a part of the universal thought-movement, and has never flourished in its greater forms save as the artistic expression of a philosophy of life and of the earnest pursuit of truth.

The 16th century was drawing to a close, and Humanism, in the sense of classicism, had done its work. The outcry against the no-method, the abstract generalizations, the continued supremacy of Grammar, and the severe discipline of the schools had full justification.

Meanwhile the vernacular and vernacular literatures of France, Germany and England, largely inspired by Italy, had been growing up side by side with the classical revival, until it was found that the true meaning of the whole Renaissance movement, in so far as it was an Art, Literature and Science movement, was to be found in modern art, modern literature, and modern science—not in Greek and Latin. This was, and is, the true Humanism. The brilliancy of these new lights began to throw Greek and Latin into the shade. The use of a more and more refined vernacular now began to affect that exclusive use of Latin in the schools which gave colloquial familiarity with it, and which, even if it had done nothing else, had put into the hands of the student the instrument of all existing learning. Knowledge in many departments was advancing. It is clear enough to us, looking back, that the question of education demanded reconsideration. Europe was passing into new conditions. In England the voice of Mulcaster was raised in advocacy of the study of English and the training of schoolmasters, but it was as that of one crying in the wilderness. There were now many, however, to express discontent with both school and university. The problem of education in its large and liberal sense must be always substantially the same, but the materials by means of which, and the conditions under which we are to educate, must be subject to continual modification.

It was now that the general dissatisfaction with the work of the schools found expression in Bacon and the Baconians (1600).